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06/04/2008

Festival legend returns to play Anne outdoors

Charlottetown – He was here when the Charlottetown Festival began, and now he is returning to help celebrate Anne Shirley in 2008. Fen Watkin, the long time music director at the Confederation Centre of the Arts, will be a special guest pianist for Anne™ Outdoors on the afternoon of June 14.

Anne™ Outdoors features the Charlottetown Festival's 19 piece orchestra playing a one hour condensed version of the music from Anne of Green Gables – The Musical™ in the outdoor amphitheatre at the Confederation Centre of the Arts. The performance is part of Anne-imated, Charlottetown's day of celebration commemorating the 100th anniversary of the novel Anne of Green Gables. The free performance begins at 1 p.m. under the direction of current Music Director Donald Fraser.

"For 40 years, Fen Watkin was involved with most of the Festival's productions on stage and on tour. He announced his retirement at the close of 2004 season after 12 years as Associate Music Director and 28 years as Music Director," Fraser says. "This is a real treat that he has agreed to play for us again."

"The Festival has certainly been the most important and rewarding part of my professional life," Watkin said at the time of his retirement. "I'm just so glad that I was a part of it all, right from the beginning, helping to shape it and take it this far."

Since 1965, the Charlottetown Festival has staged more than 200 original Canadian musical theatre productions. Watkin was involved in some way in all of these productions during his

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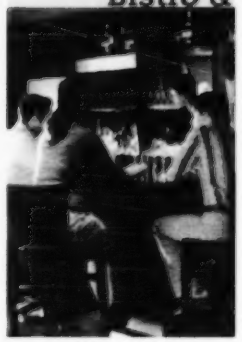

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Arnaud Maggs, *Self-portrait with Deborah, Oued Laou*, 1969, gelatin silver print.
From the exhibition *Photography 101: push the button*. Until

2008-04626/

September 28

Anne of Green Gables - The Musical™: June 12 - September 27 (select dates)

The Ballad of Stompin Tom: July 3 - September 20 (Mon - Sat)

Feist: November 10

tenure with the Festival – as conductor, rehearsal accompanist, musical transcription, and musical director. More than 3 million people around the world have seen Watkin conduct the orchestra for Anne™ in Charlottetown and on tour across Canada, Japan, and the United States.

He has been strongly supportive of musical, artistic, and theatrical initiatives in PEI, including recitals at St. Peter's Cathedral, UPEI, and the St. Mary's Church in Indian River. Watkin was awarded the Order of Canada in 2005. He received an honorary degree from UPEI in 2006.

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